



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

THE
AMERICAN SURGICAL ASSOCIATION

ITS INFLUENCE ON THE GROWTH AND
DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN SURGERY

BY
CHARLES A. POWERS, M.D.

DENVER

PROFESSOR OF CLINICAL SURGERY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Delivered Before the American Surgical Association
Washington, May 6, 1913

*From the
Transactions of the American Surgical Association*

1913

1913



1949/1950

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT.

THE AMERICAN SURGICAL ASSOCIATION. ITS INFLUENCE ON THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN SURGERY.

By CHARLES A. POWERS, M.D.,
DENVER, COLORADO.

It is with no ordinary feelings of emotion that I endeavor to express my deep appreciation of the great honor which you have conferred upon me. The Presidency of this splendid body of surgeons, the greatest distinction which can possibly be awarded, must necessarily make one sober and reflective. However unworthy I am of this mark of your confidence, my appreciation and gratitude are unbounded.

Six of our Fellows, Drs. Billings, Bristow, Oviatt, Richardson, Cabot, and Horwitz have left us during the year. Extended accounts of the lives of these distinguished men will appear in the report of the Committee on Necrology, but it is fitting that added comment should be made here.

Dr. Billings was made an Honorary Fellow in 1905. He had served with distinction as a surgeon during the Civil War and at its close was made curator of the Army Medical Museum and Library. He created the Library of the Surgeon-General's office and to him especially was due its magnitude and character. He was the Medical Adviser of the Board of Trustees of the Johns Hopkins Hospital during the formative years of

that institution. He was the worthy recipient of high honorary degrees from leading universities both here and abroad.

Dr. Oviatt was a hardy, self-reliant, efficient surgeon. He was a power for good in the city and state in which he lived. He was ever on the side of right, he builded much and always well.

Dr. Bristow's membership dates from 1906. A courteous, high-minded gentleman, a skilful, accomplished surgeon, he took active interest and part in our proceedings. Our present program bears the title of a communication which he would have presented had he not fallen victim, as he did, to septic infection contracted while saving the life of another.

Dr. Horwitz was elected to our body in 1899. His father was of the first upon whom Honorary Fellowship was conferred, and he was a worthy son. Of engaging personality, Dr. Horwitz was an accomplished teacher and a most excellent surgeon. Many positions of trust were confided to him and to all of these he was ever faithful.

Dr. Cabot had been a member of our Association for twenty-four years. During the year before his election to this body he was made surgeon to the Massachusetts General Hospital, continuing in that capacity until 1907. A careful and thorough teacher, a faithful, skilled, painstaking surgeon, he was eminent in general surgery, while in the domain of genito-urinary surgery he was preëminent. His activities extended far beyond the line of strictly professional work. He was interested in, and actively engaged in the betterment of, everything in the intelligent community in which he lived.

Of Dr. Richardson it is not easy to speak. Elected a Fellow of our Association in 1887 he was absent from but one of its twenty-five annual meetings, while his contributions, both in formal articles and in discussions, were constant and most valuable. He served the Association as Secretary, as Vice-President and as President. His affection for it and for its individual members was deep and sincere. Intelligent, alert, honest, thorough, and true, he illuminated every subject on

which he wrote or spoke. He was a great man as well as a great surgeon. Cabot said of him, shortly after his death: "Big of body, great of soul, strong of mind, and warm of heart." We owe and feel a lasting debt of gratitude to Maurice H. Richardson.

The International Surgical Society will meet in the city of New York in the early part of the coming year. This will be an event of the first magnitude in the surgical world. It will be the first meeting held outside of the city of Brussels which was the birthplace of the Society. The meeting will be attended by the foremost surgeons of the various countries of the world. All who have attended the meetings in Brussels have been impressed by the thoroughness of preparation, the excellence of arrangements, the high character of the scientific work accomplished and the exceedingly delightful hospitality of the Belgians. At the meeting in Montreal, last year, our Association appointed a Committee on this international meeting with Dr. Park as Chairman, which Committee will report to you at this time. I earnestly invite for this report your most attentive consideration. Individually and collectively we are to be the hosts on this very important occasion, remembering, if I may venture to so suggest, that it requires far more of an effort for the European Surgeon to come to us than it does for one of us to go to Europe.

A timely movement finds place in the establishment of the Lister Memorial Ward in the Royal Infirmary of Glasgow. The details of the plan will be laid before you at this meeting. The great surgeon was for many years an Honorary Fellow of this Association; all of humanity paid homage to him during his life, this Association will be among the first to aid in suitably commemorating his wonderful achievements.

Our Association has completed thirty-three years of active life, and in selecting a subject to lay before you I have thought it not improper to ask you to consider with me some features in the history of our body, a history which has been at all times highly creditable and of which we may well feel more than

proud, together with some of the conditions which have attended the recent development of American surgery and the place which our school occupies in the modern surgical world. My treatment of this subject will necessarily be more or less discursive. I am fully cognizant of my own shortcomings in the matter of accomplished work but I have been a close student of surgical conditions in our country for thirty years and I have an unbounded pride in the splendid achievements of my fellow countrymen.

Our Association has exerted a profound influence upon the growth and development of American Surgery; we as individuals owe it more than we perhaps realize. I know that our distinguished Fellow, Dr. Mears, an original member, has made this the subject of interesting and instructive contributions, but I have felt that the impressions of one who entered the ranks during the mid-period of the Association's life might prove of supplemental value.

The beginning of our Association was simple and dignified. The project had its inception in the mind of that master-surgeon, Dr. Samuel D. Gross, who confided details of his plan to a few of his friends at the meeting of the American Medical Association held at Atlanta, Ga., in May, 1870. It was agreed that on the following day, immediately after the adjournment of the surgical section of the Association, he should, in a brief speech, lay the plans agreed upon before that body. This having been done, the meeting was organized by the appointment of the eminent and venerable Dr. L. A. Dugas, of Augusta, Professor of Surgery in the Medical College of Georgia, as Chairman, and Dr. William W. Dawson, of Cincinnati, Professor of Surgery in the Medical College of Ohio, as Secretary. Brief addresses were made by different gentlemen, all cordially approving of the objects of the meeting. It being apparent, however, that the kind of an organization desired could not then be effected, nothing further was done on that occasion. Before separating Dr. Gross and his associates decided that a circular should be sent to the principal surgeons of the United States, setting

forth their plans and inviting coöperation at a conference to be held in New York during May or June, 1880.

Organization was perfected at this next meeting which was held in the lecture room of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Twenty-third Street and Fourth Avenue, New York City, May 31, 1880, forty-eight gentlemen signing the constitution and thus becoming Fellows¹ of the Society.

Dr. Gross was made President and Dr. Weist, of Richmond, Ind., Secretary. A Constitution and By-Laws were temporarily adopted. The next meeting was held in Richmond, Va., May 5, 1881, nineteen Fellows being present. No scientific papers were presented. The meeting of 1881 was held at Coney Island, New York, September 13, 14, and 15. Eleven Fellows were present and five surgical theses were read and discussed. Dr. Gross was reëlected President.

The meeting of 1882 was held in the hall of the College of Physicians, Philadelphia, on the last day of May and the first two days of June. Twenty-five Fellows registered and fifty gentlemen, from various parts of the country, were elected to Active Fellowship. Fear had been expressed that the Association would affect the strength of the American Medical Association. This was vigorously denied by Dr. Gross,² who said: "We can hurt no Society now in existence, or likely to come into existence. We can hurt only ourselves if we fail to do our duty. We hope to make the American Surgical Association an altar upon which we may annually lay our contributions to science, and so show to the world that we are earnest and zealous laborers in the interest of human progress and human suffering." Dr. Gross claimed that the American Medical Association would be strengthened by the new organization. That his prediction came true is realized by all of us who attend the splendid meetings of the Section on Surgery of that body.

¹ Of these forty-eight gentlemen but three, Drs. Keen, Mears, and Marks, are now living.

² Dr. Gross had been the Chairman of the Section on Surgery of the American Medical Association in 1867, 1870, and 1873.

At this meeting of 1882 four scientific papers were read and discussed, a large portion of the time of meeting being occupied in perfecting organization. Although he vigorously protested, Dr. Gross was again elected to the Presidency.

The meeting of 1883 was held in Cincinnati, forty Fellows signing the register. The Association urged its venerable President to accept a reelection, but this he steadfastly declined and the eminent Dr. E. M. Moore, of Rochester, New York, was made his successor. Before adjourning the following resolution was unanimously adopted: "Resolved, That a vote of thanks be returned to our retiring President, Samuel D. Gross, and that the members of the Association unite in the hope that he may long be spared to meet with us, to cheer us by his presence and to guide us by his wise counsels."

The fifth annual meeting was held at Washington, April 30, May 1, 2, and 3, 1884, forty-three Fellows being present. The venerable founder was absent on account of illness, his paper on "Wounds of the Intestines" being read by Dr. T. G. Richardson. On motion, the following telegram was ordered sent:

Professor Samuel D. Gross, Philadelphia.

The American Surgical Association has listened with pleasure and profit to your paper, regrets your absence, and sends the sympathy of all of its Fellows and their hope for your speedy recovery.

EDWARD M. MOORE,
President.

Important papers were read and discussed, and on the fourth day of the meeting the following additional telegram was ordered sent:

Prof. S. D. Gross, Philadelphia.

The Fellows of the American Surgical Association are unwilling to depart until they are able to learn whether their hope for the improvement of your health has been realized.

This hope was not to be made real, for three days later the great surgeon entered upon his long rest. His own hope had, however, been realized; the American Surgical Association,

which he had founded and sustained, had lived and grown and become an honor to him.

It is not possible for one to study the volumes of the *TRANSACTIONS* or the book of Minutes without feeling that the broad and lofty spirit of the Founder and his colleagues pervaded all that was done. Thus, in the presidential address of the meeting of 1885 the eminent Dr. William T. Briggs, of Nashville, said; "We may safely indulge the confident expectation that this meeting will be characterized by the spirit in which the Association had its origin, and will be pervaded by the same united purpose, the same harmonious and agreeable intercourse and similar valuable work to that which has edified and instructed us in previous meetings, and which, in the brief period of its existence, has so illustrated the usefulness of the Association, that its permanency as an exponent of the status of American Surgery, and as a factor in the true advancement of its science and art, is fully assured."

At this meeting of 1885 the first of the foreign Honorary Fellows were elected. These were: Paget, Lister, Erichsen, Annandale, von Volkmann, von Nussbaum, von Eschmarch, von Czerny, von Billroth, von Langenbeck, Ollier, and Verneuil. Of these twelve distinguished European surgeons but one, von Czerny, survives.

At the meeting of 1886, Dr. C. H. Mastin, of Mobile, proposed the union of nine of the special associations under the title of, "The Congress of American Physicians and Surgeons," and in due course of time, and largely through the patient labor of Dr. Mastin, this Congress was formed, practically under the organization which governs it today. No comment need be made regarding its success; once in three years we all meet, at this suitable season of the year and in this beautiful city of Washington, and I feel sure that it is both interesting and instructive for the members of the various Societies to renew old acquaintance and profit by the reports of the advances which are being made in the various departments of Medicine other than those in which they are most actively engaged.

At the meeting of 1891 a Committee on the Address of the President, Dr. Mastin, recommended: "That the President be empowered to appoint a committee with authority to confer with the friends and admirers of the late Professor S. D. Gross, and with the profession at large, for the initiation of a movement on the part of the Association, having for its object the erection of a monument to Dr. Gross, in the City of Washington." A Committee of twenty-six of the Fellows under the Chairmanship of Dr. J. R. Weist, of Richmond, Ind., who had earnestly and ably served the Association as Secretary since its foundation, was appointed to forward this project. Their labors were successful, and in 1897 the dignified statue of our Founder, suitably placed in the city in which we are now meeting, was unveiled with appropriate ceremonies.

Allusion has already been made to the important meeting of the International Surgical Society which will be held during the early part of the coming year in the City of New York. We are not to forget that the original suggestion for the formation of such a society had its inception in the mind of our esteemed Fellow, Dr. Keen, who set forth a definite design at the meeting of our Association in 1895. Although fruition did not attend this particular plan the seed which he sowed fell on good ground, and I think it quite safe to say that it indirectly resulted in the formation of the dignified international surgical body which held its first meeting in the City of Brussels in 1905.

It would be trite to dwell on the advances which have been made and which are being made in Surgery. The progress has been as constant as it has been efficient. The scholarly Cheever in his address before this body in 1889, discussing the future of surgery, gave under the heading of operations as yet *sub judice*, or on trial, resection of the pylorus; resection of cancerous intestine, of omentum; removal of the spleen; of large bronchoceles; of the larynx; the pancreas; the prostate gland; the normal ovary; fixation of the kidney, of the uterus; puncture of the pericardium; opening gangrenous abscesses in the lungs; tapping the ventricles of the brain. It need not be said that with the

exception of the removal of the normal ovary all of these are ordinary procedures of today and that to these fields very many others have been added. "By the work one knows the workman." I have already said that I feel unbounded pride in the work of the American surgeons who have gone before us, who are now, as seniors, resting from their labors, and of those still in, and approaching, their most productive period. It has been well said that: "The achievements of its citizens are the most valuable assets of a country." It is in a spirit far from boasting that I say that my fellow members of this Association have contributed constantly and effectively to the splendid progress which has placed modern surgery among the brilliant phenomena which characterize the last quarter of a century. This sentiment, to which I give expression, is a part of myself, and the thought leads me to ask, in a tentative way, whether we have not at this time and in this country a distinctive school of surgery? Definite answer to this must be made by our colleagues in other lands, and yet, as one views and reviews the leading clinics of the United States and of Canada he feels that there are certain marked characteristics which leave their impress on the mind of the impartial observer. Can these impressions be expressed in words? Not easily, yet an attempt may be made.

One marked characteristic of our surgery would be, perhaps, a very broad spirit of catholicity and eclecticism. From the earliest days our surgeons have travelled, have studied, have gathered and brought back and placed in practice the best which they have found in other countries.¹ This has not been mere imitation, it has been intelligent selection. Further, our students and teachers have constantly added to the fruits which they have gathered abroad. The surgery of the brain and spinal cord, of the thyroid gland, of the breast, of the abdomen—especially the regions of the appendix vermiformis, of the gall-bladder, of the stomach, of the duodenum, of the large intestine

¹ It is not possible to in any way give adequate expression to the feeling of debt which we owe to the surgeons of other lands.

—gunshot wounds of the abdomen, the surgery of the urinary bladder, of the prostate gland, of the cardiovascular system, of the joints, to mention but a few special regions, all bear eloquent testimony to their labors. Again, they have made a practice of journeying constantly, for surgical study and observation, in this country. The meetings of the Society of Clinical Surgery form an admirable example of this, and we have, throughout the land, centres of clinical study to which our surgeons go more and more frequently. Further, this excellent habit of study travel affects the surgeons in the smaller towns, greatly to the advantage of both teacher and student, using the latter word in the sense that all thinking men remain students.

When we look over the list of surgical text-books published in this country we find reflected in no small degree the work and influence of the Fellows of this Association. Further, the books themselves will, I believe, bear favorably a comparison with those of other lands; their number and importance increases rapidly from year to year. Again, our surgical journals may well give us cause for pride.

In considering other salient features of our professional work I venture the thought that no men in surgery surpass ours in innate consideration for the best interests of the individual patient. Witness the care with which cases for operation are selected, witness the attention given to such important matters as anesthesia; witness the desire for excellence in end results; witness all that makes for evenness in surgical work. The training and development of our nursing force in surgery has been no small factor in placing our surgical work where we find it today. Our training schools of nurses justly command the admiration of the surgical world.

Surgery with us attracts the very best of young men; young men of high ideals, of noble purposes; diligent, earnest seekers of the truth. It affords these young men abundant problems for solution, and our laboratories and wards bear testimony to the efforts which they are making. Many of these accomplished young men leave the metropolitan centres in which they